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MR. PARKER'S
FUNERAL
DISCOURSE
ON THE DEATH OF
MR. *Josiah Bowles.*





A
FUNERAL DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED IN THE BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE
H A R V A R D :

AT THE INTERMENT OF
Mr. *Josiah Bowles*,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE,
MARCH 29, 1799,
IN THE 23d. YEAR OF HIS AGE.

BY THE REV. *ISAIAH PARKER*,
PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN
H A R V A R D.

*Published at the repeated request, of the widow, and FRIENDS
of the deceased—To whom it is most respectfully Inscribed by
THE AUTHOR.*

B O S T O N :

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Funeral Discourse.

THE present occasion, is most solemn and affecting. The ninth instance of mortality, of one family, in the short term of six years, four months, and four days, now presents to our view. O what a change! What an alteration this! O death what hast thou done! How hast thou destroyed and laid waste!*

The words I have chosen to speak from upon this melancholly occasion, are written in

ST. PAUL'S FIRST EPISTLE TO THE COR. XV. CHAP. 26 VER.

THE LAST ENEMY THAT SHALL BE
DESTROYED, IS DEATH.

EVIDENT it is, that corporal death, or the death of the body, is intended by the apostle in my text: this appears from the whole scope of the Chapter. There were certain persons, among the brethren at Corinth, who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and consequently opposed and denied the doctrine; which was one particular

* Deacon William Bowles removed from Worcester to this place, with a large family in April 1791. The first who fell a victim unto death, was a daughter, named Polly; she died Nov. 25, 1792. The second a daughter, named Betsey; she died Jan. 9, 1793. The third a child, named Stephen; who was scalded to death, Feb. 13, 1793. The fourth a son, named John; who died Sept. 23, 1795. The fifth, was the kind Father and careful provident, who died July 11, 1796. The sixth was a son, named Nathaniel; who died Jan. 24, 1797. The seventh a daughter, named Nancy; who died Feb. 20, 1797. The eighth was the kind, tender and affectionate Mother; who after she had spent wearisome days and nights, with many tears and sorrows, in attending to, and mourning over her dying friends, closed her eyes in death Nov. 11, 1798. The ninth, whose remains are present, resigned his spirit into the hands of his God, March 29, 1799. Of a numerous family, formerly consisting of sixteen, only two now remain, who are numbered with the living.

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particular occasion of the Apostle reasoning in the manner he did, in the context; wherein he endeavoured to first prove the past resurrection of Christ; which he supports by several cogent arguments: after which he considers, that there is a real connection between the resurrection of Christ, and the resurrection of his people. *“And now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept: For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die;”* i. e. become subject to dissolution, or corporal death, *“even so in Christ shall all be made alive,”* i. e. be raised from the dead. *“But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming, then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, all authority and power; for he must reign ’till he hath put all enemies under his feet; and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”*

Death is often spoken of as a person, reign and dominion are ascribed to him; but strictly speaking, death consists in a dissolution of the constituent parts of man, or a breach of that which unites soul and body together; upon which the various functions cease to act, and become dormant. But the scriptures will warrant us to speak of death, in a figure of speech, as a person, unto whom reign and dominion are ascribed, and in this sense, we may say, death hath erected his empire,

pire, and reigned from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

Death hath reigned from Adam to Moses, and from Moses down to the present period of time. The Fathers where are they, and the Prophets, do they live forever? No, long since death hath cut them down, and they are turned to dust, and are mingled with their native earth.

Death makes free with Kings and Peasants, with all orders and degrees of men: It hurls the Mighty from their Seats, and takes the Crown from the Regal Head: there is no age nor sex exempted from its Control or Dominion: It lays waste Generation after Generation, and none can withstand its power, or escape its cruel hand. *"There is no discharge in this War: It is appointed for Man once to die, and the Grave is the House appointed for all the living."*

In further attending to my subject, I shall first speak of death as an enemy: 2d. Of the destruction of this enemy: And shall then conclude, by way of address.

Death may be considered as an enemy in its operations and effects.

First. It acts as an enemy to the human body. Man is fearfully and wonderfully made: there are as many wonders in the structure of our bodies as there are particles: Man is the most wonderful piece of animated clay in all the Creation of God. Not to mention the various parts of the human body in their formation, I would on'y observe, the
eyes

eyes are like brilliant orbs fitly set. It is storied that Galen, an Ancient Physician was Atheistically inclined, but upon attending to the make of the eye, saw so many wonders in it, that he concluded from the same, there was a God who Created it. The limbs are well proportioned active and strong : The tongue can speak with eloquence to admiration. The countenance glowing with vital heat, and adorned with the lamp of life, appears to good advantage ; but alas ! when Death hath done his office, what an alteration ! how changed ! the beauties of the body disappear, the eyes, those expressive orbs, become opacous and lose all their glory. That glow of life which gave beauty to the countenance is lost forever ; an awful paleness takes its place. The Limbs, the once active limbs lose all their activity and strength, and are stiffened in Death : The mouth is closed in solemn silence, and the once active tongue can speak no more. The once lovely body becomes cold to the touch, and nauseous to the smell, and immediately turns to putrefaction, and soon puts on the most awful appearance.

Secondly. Death acts as an enemy to human happiness, in causing peculiar woe and distress to the Children of men. First, as it respects the subjects dying : altho' some persons appear to die without such severe pangs as others experience, yet for the most part, persons Dying are exercised with excruciating agony under nature's dissolution. O !
the

the groans and distress of Victims under the cruel hand of Death.

Second. As it separates chief friends, it leaves survivors to mourn their loss.

It is often the case that mourners have scarce time to dry their tears, for the loss of one dear friend, before all their wounds are opened afresh upon them by the Death of an other. Death often takes the tender Infant from the breast, or arms of its fond Parents, and leaves them to grieve and mourn for their little one, and Rachel like, refuse to be comforted because their Child is not.

It is often the case that if Children are not taken from the breast, but live to speak and go alone, and the affection of the Parents are cemented to them, with a threefold cord, they are then torn away by the cruel hand of Death; so that the trial is considered by the Parents, much greater than if they had died in earlier life, or had been taken from the breast.

It is often the case if we have an *Isaac* or any one we dote much upon, that Death, as tho' envious at our happiness, or as delighting in our misery, will deprive us of such an one.

It is sometimes the case that Death takes away almost, if not wholly a family of dear Children at one stroke, or in a sudden and awful manner, and leaves the Parents Childless to mourn in lonely sorrow.

Death sometimes passes by the Children and assaults the Parents; it sometimes takes away the
provident

provident, or head of the Family, and leaves the Children Fatherless. Sometimes it takes the fond Mother, and leaves the Children Motherless.

Sometimes death deprives Children of both Parents, and they are left to the care of strangers.

Death sometimes disappoints those whose hearts are united in love, who have come under engagements to unite in wedlock, and perhaps are anticipating the happy period; but as an enemy, Death steps in and disappoints their hopes, by taking away one, and leaving the other to mourn in solitude.

Sometimes the happy lovers are permitted to accomplish their designs, in entering into a conjugal state, and they wish to live and enjoy one another, and to walk hand in hand through life, but Death, cruel Death puts a period to their joys, by separating them from each other in early life.

Sometimes the happy pair are permitted to live together to a good old age, their minds are cemented together with the strongest ties of love and friendship; they would be glad to finish life together, but alas! Death, as an enemy cuts down one of the aged pair, and leaves the other in solitude to make his moans to the empty air: No one to unbosom his complaints unto, under all the infirmities of old age; But lonely Days and Nights are appointed the survivor, till days and time shall be no more with him forever.

Third. Death acts as an enemy to human happiness in that after persons have toiled and laboured
to

to lay up wherewith to spend in advanced life, and have eaten the bread of carefulness, and have been prospered in their undertakings, and have accumulated so much property, as to flatter themselves they have Goods laid up for many years, and that they should enjoy themselves in life: Death often steps in at such a period as this, and cuts them down, and their Earnings, or Estates they leave for others to enjoy. All their life was a life of labour, care and toil, not of enjoyment, only by anticipation. Again,

Fourth. Death is an enemy to human happiness, in that it frightens the children of Men, and fills them with anxiety. We read of some, who through fear of Death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Some are anticipating Death in such a manner, that it may be said of them, they are in Deaths oft, or in some measure, suffer Death a thousand times. Some people are perpetually tormenting themselves with fear that they should die, or that some of their Friends should die &c. They are like the troubled sea which cannot rest: their fear mars their happiness, and spoils their joys.

Thirdly. Death as an enemy destroys and lays waste the Children of men. It depopulates Towns and Cities.—What havock it has made of late years, in our principal Sea-Ports, more particularly in the City of Philadelphia, but New-York, New-London, Boston, and other places have not been exempted from his stroke; but have felt his
power

power and cruelty. How many have fallen a prey to the King of Terrors, in the present European War, is beyond conception !!!

It appears that Death never did destroy and lay waste faster than in the present age of the world.

Fourthly. Death may be considered as an enemy in that it has its weapons.

The weapons of Death are many, and powerful ; but all may be comprised under three general weapons, viz. War, Pestilence, and Famine ; all which are employed in destroying the Inhabitants of the Earth, and will finally bring about the Dissolution of all living. How awful, how melancholly and solemn is the thought, that in a little time, all who are now alive, will be Dead ! will be beneath the gloomy Clods of the Valley, and become food for Worms, and will be turned to their primitive dust, and the places that now know them, will know them no more forever ! how humiliating the view of humane nature ? Methinks the blood would almost chill in our Veins, and we die at the thoughts of Death, if it was not for the Consolation the Gospel affords us ; life and immortality are brought to light by the glorious Gospel : By it we are furnished with a hope beyond the Grave. We are assured from the Sacred page, that altho' Death hath reigned, still reigns, and will reign, till the time appointed for its destruction be fully come, yet it will come, tho' it seems to tarry long, and the Tyrant Death will finally and completely be destroyed,
for

For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

I pass 2d. to consider the destruction of death, this enemy of mankind, who hath deprived the inhabitants of our earth, of that joy and comfort they might have enjoyed, and the noble creation of God, of that beauty, excellency and glory with which they were created. Methinks this must be a delightful theme in its own nature ; for suppose some tyrant had reigned uncontroled, and had made all to tremble and fall before him, and had filled the world with the greatest confusion and distress ; if you should hear that his reign was fast coming to an end, and he was about to be destroyed ; you would be lavish of your attention, and your hearts would leap for joy, and gladness ; yes surely joy would be seen in every countenance. It is true, all the human race are unequal to the work of destroying the enemy we have been describing. But glory to God in the highest ! there is a certain Prince, Clothed with omnipotence, who has undertaken, & is engaged in the work and will completely effect it : It is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who was promised soon upon the apostacy of the Primeval pair ; as the seed of the woman who should bruize the Serpent's Head : who was
" Manifested for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and has engaged to destroy him who hath the Power of Death, i. e. the Devil, and to deliver those who through fear of Death are all their life time subject to bondage ; who hath said, I will Swallow up Death in Victory

ry, and will wipe away tears from off all Faces, *Isaiah*, xxv. 8. Also, I will ransom them from the power of the Grave: I will redeem them from Death: O! Death I will be thy Plague; O! Grave I will be thy Destruction." *Hosea* xiii 41. Hence Death, will as certainly be destroyed as the Lord liveth: If it should not be destroyed, it will not be, because the Son of the Eternal Father, has not undertaken and promised to do it; It must be owing to some other Cause; either that he has altered his mind and is unfaithful to his word, or that he is unable to do it: To suppose either to be the Case, is, replete with the greatest absurdity, and wickedness. To suppose that the Son of God has altered his mind, is to rob him of one of his Essential Glories, even the Glory of Immutability.

Immutability, is essential to his nature, and Godhead: that he is of one mind and none can change him, is a scripture doctrine: hence he is represented as the same yesterday, to day and forever. To suppose him unfaithful to his word, is a high reflection upon the moral character of him who is the Lord our Righteousness; who is spotless, holy, just and pure; who is represented as the faithful and true witness, as well as the first begotten of the dead; with whom there is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen to the Glory of God the Father.

To suppose him unable to fulfil his word, is a high handed reflection upon the power of him who is omnipotent: It is to suppose him weak, and
impotent

impotent, who has all power, both in Heaven & Earth in his hands. As Jesus Christ has undertaken to destroy Death, and is unvariably the same without the least Shadow of Change; and as he is faithful to his word, in all things, and is the Lord Omnipotent, who doeth his whole will both in Heaven, and in Earth; who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast; who is the Resurrection and the life: We may rest in the full assurance of faith, that altho' Death, has reigned, and still reigns, yet it will finally and completely be destroyed, by the Son of the Most High God.

Perhaps curiosity may prompt some of my hearers to inquire, when this Glorious event will take place, and by what means.

First. It virtually took place, by, and at the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who through Death destroyed him who had the power of Death, that is the Devil.

Second. It measureably, takes place, in a spiritual sense, upon believing in Jesus Christ: Faith views Christ Jesus as the end of the Law for righteousness, which sight is soul transforming, & tends to destroy sin, which is the sting of death, faith views that Law fulfilled, which is the strength of sin, so that the Christian can triumph over death, saying "*O! Death where is thy sting! O! Grave where is thy Victory!*" the soul gives thanks to God for Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Death is so destroyed, as it respects the Christian

ian, that it is not considered as a Curse, but as a Blessing; hence the apostle speaking of the Christian's privileges, says, "*Life and Death are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God.*" Altho' Death is disarmed of its sting, which is Sin, so that the Christian can rejoice even in the view of it, and can triumph over it, yet the final and complete destruction of Death will not take place, until the last resurrection.

All things are said to be put under Christ's feet, Jehovah only excepted. "*All things are not as yet subdued unto him, but all things shall be subdued unto him, for he must reign, till he hath put, or, subdued all enemies under his feet. The last to be destroyed is Death.*"

Other enemies are to be destroyed before Death, but altho' Death reigns the longest, or is the latest to be destroyed, yet it will finally be swallowed up in life, "*The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory, Death and hell shall give up their dead, and Death and hell be cast into the lake of fire, and there shall be no more Death. Rev. xxi. 4.*" Then shall be brought to pass that saying that Christ hath abolished Death, and brought life and immortality to light.

Having 1st. Noticed Death as an Enemy,
and

and 2d. the destruction of this Enemy. I pass to conclude my discourse as was proposed, by way of address ; and first, to the Widow of the deceased present.

My friend ; you have lately experienced some of Death's cruelties, and are now mourning under the same ! We feel to pity you, and in some measure to Sympathize with you, under your sore and grievous Affliction. You have experienced, in early life, what most of us are strangers to ; The loss of the partner of your Joys and Sorrows.

About ten Months since, you entered into the Marriage state, Death, as, tho' envious at your happiness has deprived you of your kind and affectionate Husband, and that when young.

Remember that Death, altho' he acts as an enemy, acts under divine permission ; and that sin is the cause why Death has ever been permitted to destroy and lay waste. What mostly concerns you, under this trying dispensation, is, wisely to improve it, to the Divine Glory, and your Good : to grow wiser and better by the things you are called to suffer, "*Knowing that no chastening for the present seemeth to be Joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them which are exercised thereby.*"

In respect to the state of the spirit departed, it does not concern you to be anxious about it ; anxiety will do no good, will alter nothing, but may impare your health. I do not conceive you have any reason to entertain gloomy apprehensions

sions in respect to the case : Altho' the deceased did not appear to experience those consolations which many of his departed friends experienced, yet for years passed he appeared to have his mind under serious impressions of a religious nature : And in respect to his outward conduct, and his moral deportment, it was that which would have been ornamental to the Christian Professor ; for my part, I cannot but hope and charitably believe, he was a lover of the Truth, and that it is well with him, and that, your loss is his gain ; and that whilst we are employed in paying the last respects to his remains, his spirit is employed in higher and more sublime services, and that he is in the enjoyment of his God.

It now becomes you to turn your attention to your own soul, and see to it that you are prepared to follow the deceased into the world of spirits. The Death of your Husband, is a loud call to you, "*Be ye also ready.*" May God grant you divine support under your present affliction, and sanctify it to you, for your spiritual and everlasting good, and finally give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified.

Second. To the surviving Brother and Sister of the deceased. My dear friends ; of a numerous Family, you are the only two, now numbered with the living : the most of your Family, Fourteen out of Sixteen, are numbered with the Dead. You have been, frequently called to give the parting hand, and to take your last farewell of
your

your dear, and Dying Friends ; you have scarce had time to dry your weeping Eyes, for the loss of one, before all the avenues of grief were opened afresh, by the loss of another. I conceive, there is not a heart present, so obdurate and hard, as to view you without pity and compassion ; nor to reflect upon your trials, without the silent tears bursting from their Eyes, and stealing down their cheeks. Your dear Parents are Dead ! Your Brothers and Sisters are all dead ! and one of you on the decline of life, and many fears await the minds, of your friends in respect to the welfare of the other : But be not discouraged, give not way to despondency, for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Yea the God of your departed Parents, and friends, still liveth. Put your trust in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and Redeemer ; altho' you may die, yet shall you live, and ere long your departed friends will appear, "*For them who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,*" and "*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory.*" Methinks, this thought must afford you great consolation, under your peculiar trials ; that the most of your departed friends afforded you ample satisfaction, that they were friends of God ; so that you have every reason to believe it is well with them : Be followers of them wherein they followed Jesus Christ, and doubtless, another day you will meet them with joy unspeakable, and join them in the exalted service, and high praise-

es of God, in the Kingdom of Glory forever. May it afford you consolation, that Jesus hath abolished Death, and that life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. When ever you are called to die, may you lay down your heads in peace, in full assurance of a Glorious Resurrection unto life Eternal.

May all present from what we have had under consideration, and from what is now before us, be reminded of our own approaching dissolution ; and realize that a few more revolving Suns, will bring about the solemn period of our own exit, when we ourselves must die.

May we realize the vanity of placing our affections on any thing of an earthly nature, either friends, riches or honor ; and bear in mind that we are born to die, and be humble before God : May we be led to reflect upon the evil nature of sin, which is the the procuring cause of Death, and all the trials which await the human Race ; and flee from sin as from an enemy.

May we be led to prize the glorious Gospel, by which life and immortality are brought to light, and esteem it above Gold, yea above much fine Gold, or even our necessary food.

May we feel the importance of having faith in him who has engaged to destroy principalities and powers ; and set to our seal that God is true ; and not give Jehovah the lie by disbelieving the record he has given of his Son : may we possess that faith which works by love, and purifies

fies the heart, and overcomes the world.

May we feel our obligations to love him who hath so loved us as to lay down his own life for us, "*here- in is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins:*" May his love be shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost, that we may be constrained to take up the Cross, and follow the Lamb whether soever he goeth.

May we feel our obligations to live to him who is the resurrection and the life, who was dead but is now alive and lives forever more, and has the keys of Hell and Death; who is engaged against our enemies, and will finally destroy Death the King of terrors, who has destroyed and laid waste the human race; so that Death shall be swallowed up in Victory.

May the past time of our lives suffice us, wherein we have served diverse lusts and pleasures, and for the future live, not to our selves, but to God, to his honor and glory in this world, "*looking for that blessed hope and Glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who will appear the second time without sin unto salvation; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his Glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*"

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," be Glory Forever.

AMEN.

the world, and overcome the world.
 This is the victory which has overcome the world.
 The world is overcome by the blood of the Son of Man.
 The world is overcome by the blood of the Son of Man.
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And the Son of Man is the Son of Man.
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AMEN

